

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An earth boring bit, comprising:

a bit body having at least one bit leg;

a cone shell rotatably mounted to the bit leg;

at least one circumferential row of compacts mounted in holes in the cone shell and protruding from the cone shell; and

a substantially flat depression in the cone shell extending between each of the compacts in the row.

2. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 1, wherein each of the depressions ~~is a flat surface~~has leading and trailing ends that intersect adjacent ones of the holes.

3. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 1, wherein each of the depressions ~~is a flat surface located in a plane that is perpendicular to a radial line of an axis of rotation of the cone~~has a perimeter with inner and outer portions that curve in directions away from each other and leading and trailing portions that curve in directions toward each other, each of the leading and trailing portions intersecting one of the holes .

4. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 1, wherein ~~each of the compacts is mounted in a hole formed in the cone shell, and each of the depressions extends~~lies in a single plane from an intersection of one hole with an exterior of the cone shell to an intersection of an adjacent hole in the row with an exterior of the cone shell.

5. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 1, wherein each of the depressions has a generally elliptical perimeter with opposite leading and trailing ends that are ~~truncated~~ that curve toward each other.

6. (Currently Amended) An earth boring bit, comprising:

a bit body having at least one bit leg;

a cone shell rotatably mounted to the bit leg;

a plurality of holes formed in circumferential rows on conical bands of the cone shell;

a compact mounted in each of the holes; and

a plurality of depressions in the cone shell extending between and having leading and trailing ends that intersect adjacent holes in at least one of the rows to increase effective projection of the compacts.

7. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 6, wherein each depression is a flat surface located in a single plane that is perpendicular to a radial line extending from an axis of rotation of the cone.

8. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 6, wherein each ~~depression has~~ of the leading and trailing ends that intersect adjacent holes, the ends having has an axial dimension that is not greater than a diameter of the adjacent holes.

9. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 6, wherein the conical band that contains the depressions has conical portions axially inward and outward of each of the ~~holes~~ depressions.

10. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 6, wherein the leading and trailing ends of each of the depressions on at least one of the conical bands has an elliptical perimeter with truncated ends where the depressions intersect adjacent holes curve toward each other.

11. (Currently Amended) The bit according to claim 6, wherein each the leading and trailing ends of each of the depressions curve toward each other, and each of the depressions has inward and outward edges that curve away from each other~~depression comprises a flat surface extending between adjacent ones of the holes.~~

12. (Original) The bit according to claim 6, wherein the depressions are located in all of the rows on the cone.

13. (Currently Amended) An earth boring bit, comprising:

a bit body having at least one bit leg;

a cone shell rotatably mounted to the bit leg for rotation about a cone axis;

a plurality of conical bands extending around and formed in an exterior surface of the cone shell;

a plurality of holes extending circumferentially around each of the conical bands;

a plurality of compacts, each of the compacts having a cylindrical barrel mounted in one of the holes and a cutting tip that projects from the conical band; and

a plurality of flats formed in at least one of the conical bands, each of the flats having circumferentially spaced-apart ends that intersect adjacent ones of the holes, each of the flats

having a midpoint between its ends that is located on a radial line of the cone axis, and each of the flats being located in a single plane perpendicular to its radial line.

14. (Original) The bit according to claim 13 wherein each of the ends of each of the flats is curved along a radius that is the same as a radius of the hole that it intersects~~has an axial width at the midpoint less than an axial width of the conical band on which it is located.~~

15. (Original) The bit according to claim 13, wherein the ends of each of the flats have an axial dimension that is not greater than a diameter of the adjacent holes.

16. (Original) The bit according to claim 13, wherein each of the conical bands has conical portions axially inward and outward of each of the holes relative to an axis of rotation of the cone.

17. (Original) The bit according to claim 13, wherein each of the holes in the row containing the flats has a constant depth measured at any point around the sidewall of the hole.

Please amend the Abstract as set forth below:

An earth boring bit has rolling cones rotatably mounted to the bit legs. Each cone has conical bands extending around the exterior. Holes are formed in each of the bands. Compacts are press-fitted into the holes, each having a cutting tip that projects from the conical band. Flats are formed in the conical bands, each flat extending between adjacent compacts. ~~The flats cause an effective increase in projection of the compacts.~~